



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AUSTIN, TEXAS
INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: Herman Horn, Chief, Bureau of Regional & Local Health Operations
Regional Directors
Directors, Local Health Departments
Directors, Independent WIC Local Agencies

FROM: Bob Kissel, Acting, Chief
Bureau of Nutrition Services

DATE: September 15, 2000

SUBJECT: Questions and Answers Received by the State Agency Regarding Rider 18

The State Agency has received the following questions from local agencies regarding the implementation of Rider 18, regarding child abuse screening, documenting and reporting which we wanted to share with all local agencies. We will send a weekly memo for the next few weeks with the questions we receive and the answers for your information. Please refer to memo 00-084 previously sent to you announcing the implementation of the policy on Rider 18.

- Q. Do the checklists need to be retained for a longer retention period than is required for WIC?
A. No, they should be retained in the client file under the same record retention requirements for WIC client records.
- Q. Do we need a checklist for every client under age 14 or just the clients of that age whom the staff are really sure have been abused?
A. A checklist is needed for every client under age 14. In addition, there is no judgement call or evaluation to be made by the staff regarding the abuse. Unless the client under age 14 is married, the client has been abused according to law and such abuse must be reported.
- Q. Why didn't the WIC staff at the state agency inform us of this initiative sooner?
A. Because this is a Texas Department of Health (TDH) initiative and policy, individual programs were asked to defer contacting local agencies until a final and consistent policy was developed for all programs. A stakeholder meeting was conducted by TDH and announced on the TDH web site. Various specific stakeholder groups representing contractors were invited to the meeting which was also open to the public. Last, but not least, WIC state agency staff participated in the work groups and represented the program and its concerns and issues.

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Q. Do we have to notify the teenager that we are reporting her?

A. No.

Q. Do we have to report a child age 14 who became pregnant while she was age 13?

A. Yes, because by law you are required to report any abuse or suspected abuse which comes to your attention. A checklist is not needed for this client, however.

Q. What are we required to do for training?

A. Each local agency can determine the components of training for themselves. The state agency will only check to make sure training was conducted.

Q. Does the state agency have to approve our local policy in advance?

A. No.

Q. Won't this seriously impact our ability to reach teens? Won't they be afraid to come in?

A. It may; however, this is a state law and we must comply.

Q. Since by the time a pregnant teenager under 14 comes into WIC, she has probably already accessed other health and human services and been reported, do we have to report her as well?

A. Yes, there are no exceptions.

Thank you to everybody for your cooperation in implementing Rider 18. If you have any questions or suggestions for implementing/training please contact Valerie Wolfe at (5 12) 458-7111 extension 2072 or email to valerie.wolfe@tdh.state.tx.us.